

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 05241 050609 Z

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8963

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5241

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, LE, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI VIEWS ON LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 7826

1. EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE MUCH INFORMATION TO ASSIST EMB. BEIRUT WITH DETAILED REPORT OF GOI THINKING ON SITUATION IN LEBANON ALONG LINES REPORTED IN ISRAELI PRESS (PRESUMABLY EMB BEIRUT REFERRING TO MARGALIT ARTICLE OF JULY 2 REPORTED IN TEL AVIV 5179). ARTICLE INDICATES REPORT OF US VIEWS CAME OUT OF WASHINGTON. EMBOFF WAS BRIEFED BY MFA DIRECTOR MID-EAST AFFAIRS (VERED) AT END OF JUNE RE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND SYRIA BUT QUESTIONS RAISED BY MARGALIT ARTICLE DID NOT COME UP. IN FACT, VERED, GAVE EVALUATION SIMILAR TO THAT CONVEYED IN BEIRUT' S 7023 AND 7260.

2. VERED TOLD EMBOFF THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE HAD MISSED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHEN HIS HAND VIS- A- VIS PALESTINIANS DURING PAST FEW MONTHS. VERED SAID THAT IN INITIAL TURN TO AMIN HAFEZ AS PRIMIN, FRANGIE HAD BROKEN BASIC RULE OF LEBANESE POLITICS. HE HAD AGREED TO AN OUTSIDER (NOT ONE OF TRADITIONAL MOSLEM LEADERS) WHO HAD NO CHANCE OF ENGAGING SUNNI MOSLEM COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR GOL POLICIES. VERED CONTINUED THAT SOLH IS SOMEWHAT BETTER BUT IS STILL NOT ONE OF TWO OR
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 05241 050609 Z

THREE REAL MOSLEM LEADERS. EFFECT AMONG SUNNI MOSLEM COMMUNITY, VERED SAID, HAS BEEN TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT BALANCE IN GOL WAS AGAINST THEM. MOSLEM LEADERSHIP NOW USING PALESTINIAN PROBLEM TO REDRESS POLITICAL BALANCE. THUS, FRANGIE, BY NOT PAYING SUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO POLITICAL REALITIES IN LEBANON, HAD BEEN AND STILL IS IN WEAKENED POSITION AS HE ATTEMPTS TO GAIN GOL CONTROL OVER PALESTINIANS.

3. VERED WENT ON TO ASSESS SYRIAN THREAT AND NOTED THAT SYRIANS ARE CREATING PROBLEMS FOR GOL FOR REASONS BASICALLY UNRELATED TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE ALTHOUGH THIS IS A FACTOR. SYRIANS HAVE TWO BASIC COMPLAINTS, LEBANESE ACQUIESCENCE IN ALLOWING ANTI-SYRIAN REGIME ELEMENTS TO OPERATE IN LEBANON, AND LEBANESE TREATMENT OF LARGE NUMBER OF SYRIANS WORKERS IN LEBANON. LEBANON FOR CONFESSIONAL REASONS IS NOT IN VERY GOOD POSITION TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT EITHER OF THESE PROBLEMS. SYRIAN REGIME HAS NIGHTMARES ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF LEBANON FORCING SYRIAN WORKERS BACK TO SYRIA. IT WOULD BE ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO EMPLOY THESE WORKERS AND THOSE WHO DID FIND EMPLOYMENT WOULD BE FORCED INTO MUCH LOWER STANDARD OF LIVING. OBVIOUSLY SUCH A RESERVE OF DISGRUNTLED WORKERS WOULD POSE SERIOUS SECURITY THREAT TO ASSAD, VERED CONCLUDED.
ZURHELLEN

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